

COUNCIL POLICY**CURRENT**

SUBJECT: STANDARDS FOR CENTRE CITY STREETS, ENHANCE PEDESTRIAN
ORIENTATION & ACCESS, MASS TRANSIT & ALTERNATIVE
TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS OTHER THAN THE AUTOMOBILE

POLICY NO.: 600-32

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 5, 1994

BACKGROUND:

Due to the increasing changes in current and future development pattern, the Transportation Element of the Centre City San Diego Community Plan, adopted in 1976, was updated to better serve the new and projected development intensity. This was achieved by the adoption of both the Preliminary Centre City Community Plan, and the Interim Centre City San Diego Development and Design Ordinance.

A policy for Preferred Street Systems in Centre City was adopted on April 15, 1985 and reflected the outdated Transportation Element of the 1976 Centre City San Diego Community Plan. On September 16, 1986, a resolution (No. R-266611) was adopted upon completion of a Centre City Transportation Action Program and the need to revise the Transportation Element of the 1976 Centre City San Diego Community Plan. This resolution guided the efforts to revise the Preferred Street System policy into an amended policy reflecting the goals and intent of the 1990 Preliminary Plan and Ordinance.

In the adopted 1990 Preliminary Centre City Community Plan, streets provide the dominant organizing feature around which buildings and open space are organized. Future projects will impact the street through increased density of use and, in certain cases, the alteration of existing streets through relocating, narrowing, or closing. The results of these activities may require further alterations in the remaining streets such as parking prohibitions, modifications in direction of flow and possible narrowing involve other property owners. Streets that present a continuity of harmonious experiences in land use, architectural forms, and open space will foster the creation of a successful urban design fabric for downtown.

PURPOSE:

This policy is adopted to outline/prescribe the general standards for developing the streets as multifunctional people spaces that de-emphasizes the automobile. It also establishes that all projects which may change the existing system of streets, direction of traffic flow, major revisions to existing on-street parking practices or increased pedestrian ways must be reviewed by the Engineering Department and Centre City Development Corporation for all public and private proposals. The policy pertains to the continued development of programs and projects that enhance pedestrian orientation and access throughout the downtown street system. In addition, it increases the emphasis on mass transit and other transportation options other than the automobile.

POLICY:

It is the policy of the City Council that Centre City streets should not be designed to accommodate additional automobiles alone, but, instead, the street right-of-way should be designed as a public place that emphasizes pedestrian and transit use by providing sidewalk and landscape amenities and by

designing streets to reflect the desired mode-split objectives of the Preliminary Centre City San Diego Community Plan.

The City Council shall review each project which proposes to vacate or close to public vehicular traffic any street, or significant portion thereof, on its individual merits for enhanced pedestrian movement at the conceptual stage of the project's development. Council review shall consider information provided by all appropriate reviewing City Departments, the Centre City Development Corporation, affected agencies and jurisdictions, recognized community groups, and trade associations representing downtown property owners and businesses.

Concurrent with a street closing action or consideration of a proposal to change the direction of traffic flow or street width, both the property owners impacted by the action and property owners on adjacent streets where the impacts of the proposed action might be felt will be notified. Impacts involved include, but are not limited to the reduction of right-of-way, change in direction of one-way, traffic flow, conversion of traffic flow either to one-way or from one-way, reduction of parking, etc.

Streets will not be characterized as merely traffic channels. Social and physical design issues cannot be separated without reducing the idea and function of a street to its most simplistic form — an avenue only for the movement of vehicles — a problem frequently encountered in modern cities where wide avenues accommodate rapidly moving vehicular traffic but are devoid of pedestrian activity. The idea of a street must extend beyond the right-of-way line, property line and even the building line in order to fully acknowledge the spaces that influence the street.

Development projects should be located and designed to take advantage of accessibility to mass transit and the initiation of Transportation Demand Management measures. They should de-emphasize the storage of downtown workers' automobiles on-site. Also, the increased use of mass transit — especially by daily commuters — with less reliance on automobiles and long-term downtown parking should be attained and enhanced through the design of the public right-of-way.

The City of San Diego Development Services Department, Engineering Department and the Centre City Development Corporation will take every opportunity during the design and approval phase of development projects to accommodate the movement of pedestrians in a safe and expeditious manner.

Streets should provide the maximum opportunity for the movement of pedestrians without creating traffic congestion. Maximizing pedestrian movement in the public right-of-way is a priority, recognizing that a certain amount of traffic congestion is unavoidable and it may be desirable on downtown streets to slow travel speed.

Streets in downtown should give priority to the pedestrian.

PREFERRED STREETS:

It is the policy of the City Council that the streets shown in Table 1, including the designated direction of flow, shall be the minimum system of streets considered essential to the orderly development of Centre City.

Final decisions on streets other than the preferred streets will be subject to final determination based on the Preliminary Centre City San Diego Community Plan.

The large number of developments, together with their complexity, proposed for Centre City require that this policy be periodically reviewed by Council.

TABLE 1.
PREFERRED STREET SYSTEM

****Note**

The Preferred Street System Table will be added to this policy immediately after the Engineering Department updates the travel forecast for the new boundaries of the Centre City San Diego Community Plan.

GENERAL:

Horton Plaza project requires access via the following - Second Avenue, Market to “G”; Second Avenue, “E” to Broadway; Third Avenue, Market to “G”; Third Avenue, “E” to Broadway; “E” Street, Front Street to First Avenue; and “F” Street, Front Street to First Avenue.

Implementation of this preferred system of streets may require additional capital improvements in order to minimize congestion and delay as development and redevelopment takes place in Centre City.

Changes in direction of existing traffic flow will be implemented on an “as needed” basis, when justified and approved by Council.

Developers may rely upon Fifth Avenue from “C” to the I-5 connections, Seventh Avenue from Market to Beech and Ninth Avenue from Market to Ash continuing as one way northbound as set out in Table 1. The Council recognizes that these important northbound streets are critical for egress out of downtown San Diego and further than any changes in direction of those streets will have a detrimental impact upon that section of Downtown San Diego that is currently developing “B” Street as the primary Financial District.

NOTES:

“B” Street between Third and Seventh Avenues, currently one-way westbound, is the location of seven existing high rise buildings and one in the planning stage. Further, “B” Street is a primary connection from, (a) the South Bay area via I-5, (b) the north coastal areas via I-5, and (c) the northern inland communities via State Route 163, thus providing principal ingress to these projects as well as to the core of Centre City. Studies have indicated that long range development of the downtown area may require consideration of providing for eastbound traffic on “B” Street east of Third Avenue. Because of the criticality of “B” Street, any decision regarding the change of flow must fully consider any possible detrimental impacts on the major private developments. It is recommended, however, that any new developments which may be proposed along “B” Street consider the possibility of one lane of eastbound flow.

Further, it is important that there be at least one lane of traffic open at all times on “C” Street between Ninth and Sixteenth Avenues so as to facilitate egress from downtown via State Route 163 northbound, I-5 northbound, I-5 southbound and to North Park and East San Diego via Pershing Drive.

Dependent on future traffic flow, it may be necessary for Council to extend two-way flow on “G” Street easterly to Sixth Avenue within the existing roadway because of inbound morning peak period left turn capacity problems that may occur on Fourth Avenue and “F” Street. Extending “G” Street two-way to Sixth Avenue would provide an additional opportunity for motorists diverted from “F” Street because of its closing at Fourth Avenue, to jog over to “G” Street via Sixth Avenue. For this reason, no developments should be allowed which would prevent this extension.

HISTORY:

Adopted by Resolution R-255020 09/15/1981
Amended by Resolution R-256223 04/19/1982
Amended by Resolution R-258220 04/11/1983
Amended by Resolution R-262923 04/15/1985
Amended by Resolution R-266611 09/16/1986
Amended by Resolution R-277569 03/25/1991
Amended by Resolution R-284239 07/05/1994